

Former teacher of the year releases new book

By Leeann Fragosa

Appalachian author and 2022 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Willie Edward Taylor Carver, Jr. released his hybrid novel *Tore All to Pieces*.

The book blends short stories and poetry set in a fictional Appalachian town called Mosely.

"*Tore All to Pieces* is about loving the people I love in Eastern Kentucky exactly as they are and not feeling the need to make them anything else for outside people," said Carver. "It's a book about imperfect people living imperfect lives and being worthy of love."

The title draws from a phrase commonly heard throughout Appalachia.

"My husband is from Georgia, so Appalachia is new to him. When we first moved here, he was obsessed with how often people said the phrase," said Carver. "Everybody was just *tore all to pieces* about everything. Once he pointed it out, I realized, yes, we do say it for everything."

The title also speaks to the experience of Appalachians who feel like outsiders in their own region.

"We do belong. Our story is part of Appalachia's story," said Carver. "You can't really tear us out. We're a part of the larger painting, and if you try to, you destroy the painting."

The book is told through multiple perspectives, with each standing on its own while still connecting to the others.

"A character who's a villain in one story is the protagonist of another," said Carver. "It's thinking about who we are, depending on who's looking."

Carver said the characters are inspired by people he admires in Southeastern Kentucky.

"I think it's really important that we handle stories carefully," said Carver about the topics he explores through these characters. "These are not just people I know and experiences I've had, but people I love."

The town of Mosely is influenced by Martin, Kentucky, where Carver grew up.

"[It] sort of doesn't exist anymore," said Carver. "The funny thing is, some of the elements of Mosely exist or existed in real life. For example, Beaver Creek and Cow Creek."

While the book includes LGBTQ+ characters, Carver said he didn't want to center them or over-explain them.

"I didn't want to have to justify my characters. I didn't want them to have to get out of here and prove themselves," said Carver. "I just wanted them to be who they were. In reality, who they are is queer folk alongside non-queer folk... It doesn't feel like a queer story. It feels like a story about Eastern Kentucky, which just happens to have LGBTQ people, because that's what it feels like in real life."

Carver taught in Floyd County and was named Kentucky Teacher of the Year in 2022. He later stepped away from teaching and began focusing on writing.

Now, with his second book out, writing stories like this one means everything to him.

"It means everything in the world to me for me to take the people in my life who do not get seen as mattering," said Carver. "Being able to share those stories and to say these people matter. These people are legitimate. It makes my heart full and reminds me why we write."

Tore All to Pieces is available online and in local bookstores.

Carver will be making several stops for his book, including 5 p.m. on April 2 at CoffeeTree Books in Morehead, 6 p.m. on April 4 at Gateway Regional Arts Center in Mt. Sterling and 7 p.m. on April 7 at Carmichael's Bookstore in Louisville.

CLARK: Toxicology report is still pending in candidate's case

from FRONT page

While speaking with Clark, Lovett reported the presence of alcohol allegedly coming from Clark's breathe. Clark was allegedly unsteady on his feet and had slurred speech, Lovett wrote.

Clark performed various field sobriety tests, was arrested without incident and was taken to Baptist Health Corbin. Clark was unable to contact an attorney and submitted to his blood being drawn. The toxicology test on his blood is pending, according to the citation.

Clark was released from the Whitley County Detention Center later in the day Tuesday on a \$1,500 surety bond, according to the detention center's website and online Whitley District Court records.

No arraignment date had been scheduled as of press time.

The News Journal was unable to speak with Clark's attorney, Seth Reeves, by press time Tuesday evening.

SALOMI: Two Whitley Co. convictions

from page A-5

Both convictions were in Whitley County, the arrest citation stated.

A search of the Michigan Sex Offender Registry showed Salomi as compliant with a Michigan address. However, through the Courtnet search and statements Salomi allegedly made, Carr determined he had been living in Kentucky since 2019 and was not registered in the Kentucky sex offender registry, Carr wrote.

Judge Fred White entered a not guilty plea on Salomi's behalf during his arraignment Monday morning in Whitley District Court. White appointed the public advocate's office to represent Salomi, scheduled an April 7 preliminary hearing in his case, and set his bond at \$7,500 cash.

As of 11 a.m. on Tuesday, Salomi remained incarcerated in the Whitley County Detention Center, according to the detention center's website.

A News Journal search of the Kentucky State Police Sex Offender Registry Tuesday afternoon showed no one with the last name Salomi.

A News Journal search of the Michigan Sex Offender Registry revealed an Andy Sardis Salomi with the same date of birth as the Andy Sardis Salomi arrested in Whitley County.

Baptist Health Corbin marks near completion of ongoing expansion with Topping Out ceremony



Photos by LEEANN FRAGOSA and SUBMITTED

By Leeann Fragosa

Baptist Health Corbin (BHC) marked a major milestone in its ongoing expansion with a Topping Out Ceremony, celebrating the placement of the final structural beam for its new patient wing.

Hospital leaders, staff, elected officials and community members gathered on March 27 to recognize the progress of the project and the people behind it.

"Historically, when the final beam is placed on a building, it marks more than progress in steel and concrete," said BHC President Angelia Foster. "It represents the hard work, the dedication and the shared vision of every person who helped bring that structure to life. It is a moment to pause and to recognize that what has been imagined, planned and worked on for so long

is now rising up."

The expansion comes as demand for care continues to grow in the region.

"The building is not a project. It is a promise," said Foster. "A promise to the people of Southeastern Kentucky that high quality emergency and critical care will continue to grow right here at home."

The emergency room has experienced significant growth. It was originally built to serve 24,000 people a year and is now seeing 44,000 people a year.

"That growth comes [with] tremendous responsibility," said Foster. "This expansion allows us to respond to that need with action."

The intensive care unit (ICU) will expand from 10 beds to 24 beds and will provide spaces that enhance comfort and privacy.

"That means more patients can receive the advanced lifesaving

care they need close to home," said Foster.

Corbin Mayor Suzie Razmus said the expansion reflects the strength of the hospital's staff.

"We're going to have a facility that actually matches the team that we have here," said Razmus. "The people that work here in this building—that has made Baptist Health Corbin what it is. Now you're going to be working in a facility you deserve."

Attendees also had the opportunity to sign the final beam before it was lifted into place.

"One of the most meaningful traditions with the topping out ceremony is the opportunity to sign the final steel beam," said Foster. "Those signatures represent more than names on steel. They represent the people, the partnerships and the shared commitment that made this day possible."

LAST CHANCE TO VOTE & WIN

"People's Choice" AWARDS

24TH ANNUAL
DEADLINE
FRIDAY, APRIL 3RD

Area's #1 Reader's Poll 2026

—OFFICIAL BALLOT—

Vote for your favorite businesses and individuals!

Two separate polls - one for Williamsburg and one for Corbin. Select the area in which you live.

CASH PRIZES 1ST PLACE — \$100 2ND PLACE — \$50

Send your ballot in for a chance to win - A drawing will be held to determine the winners

SHOPPING & SERVICES

- Accounting Service
- Air/Heat Repair
- Antique Dealer
- Appliance Dealer
- Attorney Office
- Auto Body & Repair
- Automobile Dealer
OIL CHANGES, TUNE-UPS, ETC
- Auto Services
- Auto Parts Store
- Bank
- Barber Shop
- Beauty Salon
- Building Materials
- Cabinets
- Chiropractor
- Child Care
- Check Cash Advance
- College/University
- Dentures
- Dry Cleaner
- Event Rental Facility
- Eye Wear
- Farm Store
- Finance Company
- Fishing/Tackle Dealer
- Flooring/Carpet Dealer
- Florist
- Formal Wear
- Funeral Home
- Garden Nursery
- Hearing Aid Center
- Health & Rehab Center
- Hotel/Motel
- Home Health Medical Supplies
- Home Improvement Store
- Hospital
- Insurance Agency
- Jewelry Store
- Landscaping
- Laundromat

Lighting Dealer

- Liquor Store
- Mobile Home Dealer
- Movie Theater
- Paint Store
- Pawn Shop
- Pest Control
- Pharmacy
- Place to Work
- Real Estate Agency
- Shoe Store
- Shopping Center
- Storage Facility
- Supermarket/Grocery Store
- Swimming Pool Sales & Repair
- Tanning Salon
- Tax Services
- Tire Dealer
- Towing Service
- Truck Dealership
- Urgent Care Facility
- Used Automobiles
- Waste Collection
- Window Sales & Service

Physical Therapist

- Real Estate Agent
- Stylist
- Veterinarian

DINING, FOOD & FUN

- Barbecue
- Breakfast Spot
- Buffet
- Catering
- Chicken
- Chili
- Chinese
- Dinner Date Restaurant
- Drive-In
- Family Dining
- Family Fun Place
- Farm to Table Restaurant
- Fast Food
- Fish/Seafood
- French Fries
- Hamburgers
- Home Cooking
- Hot Dogs
- Ice Cream
- Italian
- Locally Owned Restaurant
- Lunch Spot
- Mexican
- Pizza
- Produce Stand
- Recreation/Activity
- Salad
- Sandwiches
- Steak
- Trivia/Game Night
- Wings

DEADLINE IS
FRIDAY, APRIL 3RD, 2026
AT 5 PM

— CONTEST RULES —

You must be 18 years of age to enter. Only signed entries with votes in at least 15 categories will be counted and eligible for cash prize. Only one entry per person. Multiple entries from same household may be mailed together - please make sure you have the correct postage on your entries (any entry that comes postage due will not be accepted). Cash prizes will be payable by check. PHOTO COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Employees and agents of the News Journal are not eligible for prizes. All entries must be in our office by 5 pm, Friday, April 3rd, 2026

VOTES ARE FOR WILLIAMSBURG CORBIN

Name

Address

Phone

Please Note: Only entries with name, address, phone number and votes in at least 15 categories will be counted and eligible for cash prize.

ONLY ONE ENTRY PER PERSON - MULTIPLE ENTRIES WILL NOT BE COUNTED.

SEND WILLIAMSBURG ENTRIES TO: PEOPLE'S CHOICE, PO BOX 418, WILLIAMSBURG, KY 40769

SEND CORBIN ENTRIES TO: PEOPLE'S CHOICE, PO BOX 1524, CORBIN, KY 40702

ENTRIES MAY BE DROPPED OFF AT 215 N. MAIN STREET, CORBIN, KY